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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000465

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/UMB, DRL/AE, G/TIP

E.O. 12958: Declassify 06/16/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: PM CALM ABOUT TIP DEMARCHE, DEFENSIVE ON
MCC'S CONCERNS ABOUT NDI/IRI AND ELECTIONS

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Classified by Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry under
1.4 (b) and (d).

REF: State 61211

¶1. (C) Summary: In a June 16 meeting with Ambassador Chaudhry, Prime Minister Zinaida Greceanii responded with thanks for the advance warning on the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report (reftel), and promised that a Government of Moldova (GOM) coordinator for TIP would be named soon. When the Ambassador connected MCC Compact to concerns over the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI) and democratic elections on July 29, she became visibly upset, made no direct response to the concerns, and blamed the opposition for negative impressions of Moldova. At the end, she pledged her government's efforts to improve negative impressions. End summary.

TIP Report Received

¶2. (C) The Ambassador noted the laudatory comments made in the TIP Report on Moldova's efforts against human trafficking, as well as the determination that Moldova should remain on Tier 2 Watch List because "it did not demonstrate sufficiently meaningful efforts to curb trafficking-related corruption." When asked who would be the GOM's lead for trafficking matters following a recent cabinet reshuffle, the Prime Minister stated that the person selected for the position would be named soon, but still had to be convinced to take the job. (Note: The Deputy Prime Minister-level position that supervises TIP includes all human rights responsibilities, and coordination of all ministries--including the powerful Ministry of Interior--that deal with law enforcement. Later in the day, President Voronin announced that former Deputy Speaker of Parliament and Christian Democrat leader Iurie Rosca was to be Deputy Prime Minister. One day later, the GOM announced that Rosca would assume this portfolio. However, since Rosca will be campaigning for Parliament, he will be required to suspend himself from his ministerial functions until after July ¶29. End note.)

Angry and Defensive Reaction to MCC Compact
Concerns

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¶3. (C) Turning to events before and after the April 5 elections, the Ambassador summarized the negative impressions about Moldova which are current in Washington: questions of transparency and media freedom before voting day; questions about the conduct of elections; and questions regarding the treatment of protestors. During this scenesetter, the Ambassador noted that he was not judging, but reporting how Moldova is perceived. He then told the Prime Minister that these impressions had formed the background to the Millennium Challenge Corporation June 10 board meeting, at which members also raised concerns regarding upcoming elections and the non-registration of IRI and NDI. The Ambassador ended his backgrounder with an appeal to the Prime Minister for help in overcoming Moldova's negative image.

¶4. (C) The Prime Minister, who has invested a great deal of her time and interest in MCC issues in Moldova, at first ducked the issue and blamed politicians who fight against the state and travel to the United States to speak ill of Moldova. (Note: She was referring to the recent visit to the U.S. of Chisinau Mayor and Liberal Party Vice President Dorin Chirtoaca. End note.)

¶5. (C) When the Ambassador raised the issues of Romania-based Pro TV, its license-renewal problems, and media freedom, and repeated his pledge that NDI and IRI were accountable to him to remain neutral and balanced, Greceanii again evaded the issues and asked, "Do you hear what the

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opposition is saying? That if they don't win, they will consider the elections fraudulent?" When the Ambassador agreed that pre-judging the fairness of upcoming elections was of course wrong, she continued: "The opposition parties are avoiding responsibility. They accuse the government of organizing everything." She then noted that the opposition must come to the negotiating table, but that the sovereignty and independence of the country were not subjects for debate. Concluding with a dig at Pro TV, she said that the channel "always twists what I say, on the orders of someone."

¶6. (C) After her comments regarding the opposition, the Prime Minister regained her equanimity and noted that she and her government would do all that they could to change negative impressions of Moldova, and had signed a pledge to run free and fair elections. In the context of image renewal, she noted that it would be a pity, after the expenditure of so much effort, not to sign the MCC Compact in the autumn.

Comment

¶7. (C) Despite the Ambassador's specific references to easily fixed issues which harm Moldova's image abroad and make it hard for the U.S. to support Moldova, the Prime Minister offered only a general promise to fix bad impressions, without promising any specific GOM action to fix the problems. Perhaps she is under pressure from Acting President Voronin to reflect his antagonisms against NDI, IRI and Pro TV. She certainly responded coolly to a three-way meeting among her, the Ambassador, and the President, and eagerly welcomed the Ambassador's statement that

he would meet the President one-on-one. Whatever the reasons may be, the usually calm and technocratic Prime Minister gave a disappointing performance, redeemed in part by her pledge to fix perceptions of Moldova.

CHAUDHRY